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AD504857	
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31 May 1981, DoDD 5200.10; AGO ltr 29 Apr 1982	

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1130 May 69

IN REPLY REFER TO  
AGDA (M) (3 Sep 69)

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FOR OT-UT-692327

1232P.

18 September 1969

SUBJECT: Operational Report, Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st  
Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, ~~Per 1-2-69~~  
April 1969 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech.)  
APO San Francisco 96477

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SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned for Period Ending 30 April 1969.

See Distribution

References: USARV Reg 525-15, dtd 13 April 1968; PCV Reg 525-2, dtd 9 May 1968.

## 1. SECTION 1 - Operations: Significant Activities.

### a. General:

(1) Mission: The primary mission of the 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) continued to be to conduct pacification, strike, counterinfiltration and counterinsurgency operations throughout the populated areas of Quang Tri Province and in Base Area 101. (See Inclosure 2).

### (2) Operations:

(a) During the reporting period the Brigade continued to emphasize small unit search and clear operations, combined operations with ARVN, RF and PF forces and saturation ambushes and patrols at night. The emphasis continued to be on cutting the enemy's lines of communications between the old base areas in the mountains and the population in the lowlands, as well as interdicting his movement within the populated areas. During the month of February the Brigade prepared and implemented plans to protect the local GVN elections and in April a Rice Denial program was initiated. All three operations were planned and implemented in conjunction with GVN forces.

(b) In addition to operations within the Brigade AO the 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) conducted a series of operations elsewhere in the 3d Marine Division AO. From 28 February through 3 March and from 22 March through 2 April the Brigade fought two major battles south of the DMZ and west of Con Thien (See Inclosure 3, Battle of Cam Hung; and Inclosure 4, Operation Montana Mauler). On 16 March the Brigade began operations on the Khe Sanh Plain. The operations on the Khe Sanh Plain were conducted by an Armor/Mech Task Force (TF Remagen) and lasted until 29 April (See Inclosure 5). From 8 April through 15 April the Brigade conducted Operation Ellis Ravine, which was a search and clear, road building operation conducted in coordination and cooperation with the 1st and 2nd ARVN Regts, 1st ARVN Division. During Ellis Ravine a road was opened between LZ Sharon (YD335445) and Ca Lu (YD015455) giving the 3d Marine Division a route from Quang Tri to Vandergrift Combat Base that could, with a little improvement, be used as a supply route for Vandergrift Combat Base should Route 9 be closed (See Inclosure 6).

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(3) Task Organization: The Brigade's task organization was changed as the situation warranted to provide forces tailored for each task. During the majority of the reporting period, the Brigade was organized as set forth in Inclosure 1.

b. Operations in the Brigade AO (See Inclosure 2):

(1) Background:

(a) Intelligence Estimate: An analysis of the enemy situation in the Brigade AO, coupled with an analysis of cordon and search operations and saturation ambushing and patrolling that had taken place during December 1968 and January 1969 revealed that:

1. NVA and VC main force units had not returned to the populated areas.
2. The enemy continued to move in small groups, avoided contact and usually refused to fight mechanized forces.
3. A shortage of food and personnel continued to force the enemy to move in small groups from his base area to the populated areas to secure food and intelligence, and to recruit replacements for his depleted forces.
4. The infrastructure had been seriously crippled by the combined cordon and search operations of November 1968 through January 1969. In order to survive, the members of the infrastructure had to move continuously, conduct their operations during the hours of darkness, and attempt to recruit new members. In addition, cordons had become less profitable because a large number of the infrastructure had been killed, captured, or run off by the constant combined ambushing and cordoning.
5. In order for the infrastructure to survive, the enemy would have to demonstrate the inability of allied forces to prevent enemy raids and attacks by fire during Tet, and also would have to disrupt the local elections that were to take place each Sunday in March.
6. The enemy's offensive capability was limited to the conduct of harassing attacks (attacks by fire, sniping, and the placement of mines and booby traps), or terrorist activities. Major forces would have to re-enter the area from North Vietnam before a serious threat could be posed to platoon or company sized Brigade, ARVN, RF or PF units.

(b) Operational Concepts: To take advantage of the enemy situation and continue the pacification effort it was decided:

- (1) To continue the interdiction of the enemy movement from the base areas to the populated areas, and within the populated area by continuing to emphasize small unit (squad and fire team) operations. These operations were to include "Hunter-Killer" operations, saturation patrolling and saturation ambushing. Brigade forces ambushed between the population and the base area, and between population centers while territorial forces ambushed

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within the populated areas. An additional benefit of the saturation ambushing and patrolling would be the early detection of the entrance of large enemy forces into the area.

2. To continue conducting combined daylight search and clear operations with the regional and popular forces. These operations were to include integrating PF platoons and squads into the companies and platoons of the Brigade, using US tank and mechanized infantry platoons to block while RF and PF forces search an area, and conducting joint strike operations.

3. To discontinue the use of cordons for the Tet period (the month of February). It was decided that because cordons were no longer as productive as they had been it would be much better to use the available forces for ambushing and patrolling.

4. To continue maintaining continuous liaison with Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, and Mai Linh Districts; Quang Tri Province; and 1st ARVN Regt Headquarters, in order to be able to react to any enemy attack. This liaison was to include the establishment of secure voice and VHF point to point circuits between Bdc, Sector and 1st ARVN and between the Bdc and Districts. It was considered to be of particular importance to be able to react quickly to enemy attack against resettlement villages, District or Provincial Headquarters and isolated PF platoons. Joint plans were developed for the above contingencies by the Brigade, 1st ARVN Regt and the Provincial forces.

5. To insure the security of the local elections by patrolling the mortar belts with US and ARVN forces and replacing Provincial forces charged with the defense of fixed installations with US or ARVN forces. The Provincial forces were then freed to conduct security operations close to the villages and hamlets in which the elections were being held. On the days of the elections Brigade units stayed out of the populated areas completely.

(2) Tet 1969: The critical period for Tet was considered to be the entire month of February. The Brigade concentrated on ambushing and patrolling at night and combined search operations during the day. No cordons were conducted during the month.

(a) The saturation ambushing and patrolling paid off. During the Tet period no known enemy terrorist activities occurred in the AO, and captured documents stated that the enemy felt that he could no longer enter the populated portions of Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, or Mai Linh through the part of the Brigade AO west of Route 1. In addition the enemy was not able to launch an attack upon friendly forces or installations during the Tet period (in one case an enemy mortar squad was ambushed and seven (?) of the eight (8) were killed as they attempted to move to a firing position in the vicinity of LZ Sharon).

(b) The emphasis during daylight was on the combined search operations. Elements of the Brigade, Provincial forces and 1st ARVN Regt continually searched all known or suspected areas that the enemy had used as assembly areas in the past.



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(3) Local Elections (March 1969): In preparation for the local elections, careful plans were drawn up by the Vietnamese to insure that the Provincial Forces would be able to secure the voters.

(a) To provide maximum security the elections were spread over the first four Sundays in March so that there would be sufficient Provincial forces in all of the villages and hamlets in which elections were being held. In cooperation with Provincial authorities, the Brigade assumed responsibility for the defense of the critical bridges in the AO from 0600 hrs to 1800 hrs during each election day. Assuming responsibility for the bridges allowed the Provincial forces to secure the voters. The Brigade, in conjunction with the 1st ARVN Regt, also patrolled the mortar belts during the elections and was prepared to assist any RF or PF force that might have been attacked.

(b) During March and the first part of April the Brigade became heavily committed in the Leatherneck Square area and at Khe Sanh, thus not until 9 March was the Brigade able to place its maximum effort in support of the elections. Despite other commitments the Brigade was able to accomplish all of its missions. No incident was reported to have taken place during any of the elections.

(4) Rice Denial: After close coordination with Quang Tri Province, Rice Denial operations began on 23 April 1969.

(a) During the period of this report Rice Denial operations have concentrated on cutting the enemy's lines of communications, protecting the rice farmers while they harvest their crop, and preventing the VC from stealing the rice. The 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (M) has concentrated on cutting off the enemy's line of communications by constantly ambushing and patrolling the enemy's rice routes and likely temporary storage areas. The GVN forces have directed their efforts towards protecting the people and their crops.

(b) Rice Denial operations will continue through 15 June 1969 with emphasis shifting during the middle of May to search operations designed to find enemy rice caches.

c. Battle of Cam Hung (28 February - 3 March): On 24 February the 3d Sqr, 5th Cav, consisting of B and C troops and the Squadron Headquarters, was placed under the operational control of the 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (M) and on 27 February the Squadron occupied Con Thien (YD117701) and C2 (YD136646). The mission of the Squadron was to secure land clearing operations northeast of C2 and conduct anti-infiltration and strike operations in AO GRUEH (See Enclosure 3). During the early morning hours of 28 February Quat Xa Hamlet was mortared. Crater analysis indicated that the mortar fire may have come from Cam Hung (YD079629). Based on the crater analysis and on other intelligence provided by the Brigade S2 indicating enemy presence at Cam Hung, the 3-5 Cav dispatched the 3d platoon of B Troop into the area.

(1) At 1540 hrs on 28 February 3/5-5 Cav was engaged by an estimated NVA company at YD098630. The remainder of B Trp and C/3-5 Cav reinforced by

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a platoon of M/3-3 Marines moved to reinforce the platoon. The cavalry employing air and artillery on enemy positions and likely avenues of approach, closed with the enemy and swept the battle area finding 60 enemy KIA. At 1815 hrs contact was broken and the cavalry withdrew to defensive positions. Throughout the night six (6) batteries of Marine Artillery, two (2) batteries of Army Artillery, and the USS New Jersey fired into the area and on suspected enemy routes of withdrawal. Results of the day's action were one (1) US KIA, nine (9) US WIA and 60 NVA KIA.

(2) The enemy appeared to be fresh, well trained, and well equipped with new uniforms and weapons. The enemy employed small arms, machine guns and RPGs and he fought hard and well to defend his positions. An assessment of the enemy actions indicated that the cavalry had probably run into a forward defensive position for a larger force (possibly a Battalion or regiment). Based on the above estimate of the enemy situation A/4-12 Cav was ordered to move from the vicinity of Quang Tri Combat Base (QTCD) to an assembly area at YD102596 to block the south and west avenues of withdrawal. The troop moved at 0010 hrs on 1 Mar and upon arriving in the assembly area 0330 hrs was placed under the operational control of 3-5 Cav.

(3) At dawn on the morning of 1 Mar A/4-12 Cav crossed the Cam Lo River and moved north to regain contact with the enemy while B and C Troops 3-5 Cav and one (1) platoon of M/3-3 Marines moved back into the area of the previous day's contact. At 1050 hrs C/3-5 Cav regained contact via YD078639. C Troop maneuvered to dislodge the enemy from his positions while A/4-12 Cav, B/3-5 Cav and elements of M/3-3 Marines moved to seal off the battle area and prevent the enemy's escape.

(a) Shortly after contact was regained B/1-61 Mech was moved from AO EL/CK (See Inclosure 2) to C2 (YD136646) to act as Brigade reserve. At 1250 hrs C/1-11 Inf was air assaulted into the battle area and placed under operational control of TF 3-5 Cav.

(b) Throughout the day air strikes and artillery were employed in support of the assaults by the ground troops on the enemy bunker positions. The enemy was well dug in, his fortifications were extensive and he fought hard to hold his ground. By nightfall the enemy still occupied fortified positions and the Squadron withdrew to defensive positions on high ground around the enemy's locations. In an attempt to hold the enemy in position artillery was again fired on the enemy positions throughout the night and ambushes were placed between the friendly locations.

(c) Results of the day's activities were: two (2) US KIA, twenty-five (25) US WIA and 17 NVA KIA (as a result of constant contacts from 1050 hrs until 1730 hrs, ranging from sniper fire to heavy engagements between company sized units, it was impossible to check more than a small part of the battle area for enemy casualties). In addition, five (5) personnel carriers and four (4) trucks were damaged and placed out of action by the enemy.

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(d) At 012000H Mar 69 the 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M) was ordered to move at 020700H Mar 69 with a jump CP and one mech rifle company from LZ Sharon to C2. The battalion was to regain operational control of B/1-61 Inf (M) upon arrival at C2 and to be prepared to attack west to seize hill 162 (XD070635) in an attempt to prevent enemy escape to the northwest. The Brigade jump CP was also ordered to move to C2 to control the operation.

(4) At 0700 hrs on 2 Mar TF 1-61 Inf (M) moved with the Bde jump CP to C2 where TF 1-61 Inf (M) was reinforced by two (2) Marine platoons. By late morning there had been no significant contact so the 645 east west gridline was established as a boundary between TF 3-5 Cav and TF 1-61 Inf (M). TF 1-61 Inf (M) conducted search and clear operations north of the boundary while TF 3-5 Cav conducted search and clear operations in the southern portion of AO GREEN.

(5) Significant contact was never reestablished with the enemy although several small contacts were made on 2 and 3 March. By the evening of 3 March TF 3-5 Cav returned to Con Thien and C2 while TF 1-61 Inf (M) continued search and clear operations in the western half of AO GREEN until 060800H Mar 69 when the battalion returned to LZ Sharon.

### (6) Results:

a. Enemy: During the battle of Cam Hung the enemy lost 118 NVA KIA and 13 individual and 8 crew served weapons captured. In addition, 212 mortar rounds (104 60mm, 90 82mm and 18 122mm) were captured.

b. Friendly: Personnel losses were three (3) US KIA and thirty-five (35) US WIA. Seven (7) personnel carriers and six (6) tanks were damaged (most of the damage was inflicted by anti-tank mines).

c. Documents captured during the battle indicate that two (2) battalions of the 27th NVA Regt were in the Cam Hung area during the battle. After the first two days of the battle the enemy moved northwest into the DMZ, and could not be pursued.

d. Task Force Remagon (16 March - 29 April): Task Force Remagon was an armor/mech infantry task force which opened Route 9 to Khe Sanh, and conducted reconnaissance in force and strike operation on the Khe Sanh Plain. From 16 March to 11 April TF Remagon was controlled by TF 1-77 Armor and from 11 April through 29 April it was controlled by TF 1-61 Inf (M).

### (1) Background:

#### (a) Intelligence:

1. Enemy strength and disposition in the area of operations was unknown prior to starting the operation. Intelligence did indicate that highway 926, which connected north-south Route 92 in Laos with enemy base areas in Vietnam entering RVN at XD780234 and running east to XD985299 was being used by the NVA to transport men and materials into South Vietnam by wheeled vehicles. Aerial photos showed the road to be in good condition with signs

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of recent heavy use. In addition, Marine reconnaissance teams had reported hearing tracked vehicles along Route 926 during the hours of darkness, and aerial observers had, on several occasions during the latter part of February and the first of March, reported suspected tracked vehicle movement along the same route. It was believed that the tracked vehicles, if they did in fact exist, were prime movers for supply and or artillery convoys, but the possibility did exist that the enemy had moved tanks into the area (enemy tanks had struck the Lang Voi Special Forces Camp along Route 9, thirteen (13) kilometers north of Route 926 during the 1968 siege of Khe Sanh).

2. Upon first entering the area around Khe Sanh (XD862398), on 19 March 69, elements of the Task Force found only signs of the 1968 siege. As the Task Force pushed on closer to the Laotian border, its lead elements passed through the Lang Voi Special Forces Camp (XD794361). Four PT76 tanks, all of which had been destroyed, were found at the location along with an abundance of old munitions and destroyed equipment of both NVA and friendly forces. No signs of recent activity were apparent. Not until the lead elements reached the Xe Pon River (vicinity XD780340), on 20 March 1969, were there any signs of recent activity. At this point fresh footprints in the river bottom indicated possible platoon sized elements had been in the area within the last 24 hours. Aerial observers reported signs of recent activity all along the Xe Pon River on the Laotian side of the border. Such signs as gardens, corrals, and fish nets along the banks of the river were seen by the lead elements of the Task Force. Throughout the period of 23 Mar 69 through 29 April 1969, elements of the Task Force spotted vehicle lights and a large amount of anti-aircraft fire almost nightly in the vicinity of the Co Roc Mountains (XD740317). Intelligence reports, red haze and reports from aerial observers operating in the vicinity of TF Remagen during the hours of darkness all indicated that there was an extremely large enemy force encamped west of the Co Roc.

3. The dominating terrain feature in the area of operations south of Route 9 was the Co Roc. The Co Roc is a granite ridge, in Laos, that runs along the border from XD725348 southeast to XD760321 and then south to XD753270. Varying in height from 850 meters to 515 meters above sea level the Co Roc is about 300 meters higher than the Khe Sanh Plain and the crest of the ridge is only one to three kilometers inside Laos. From their privileged sanctuary high atop the Co Roc the enemy was able to direct mortar fire on Task Force Remagen as it moved toward Route 926, and with artillery the enemy could control the majority of the Khe Sanh Plain. Other than the Co Roc the terrain in the area of operations was of two types: High steep mountains, and gently rolling plateau covered with elephant grass. The high steep mountains were characterized by dense undergrowth and numerous mountain streams and were found on the eastern and northern portions of the area. The slopes of the mountains were a challenge to track vehicles and exceeded sixty percent (60%) in many cases; See Inclosure 1 (Area of Operations). The plateau ran generally west from the Khe Sanh area and to the south along the Xe Pon River under the Co Roc with elephant grass up to fifteen (15) feet high covering the remainder of the area. Erosion has caused many gullies running from the mountains, west into the Xe Pon River.

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Cover and concealment was good for dismounted troops throughout the area and concealment for tracked vehicles would have been good along the Xe Pon River, where the trees and surrounding vegetation exceeded 100 feet in height in most areas, except that the area was so dry that the vehicles could be easily spotted by the dust that they stirred up as they moved.

4. The weather for the period 16 March to 12 April was extremely dry with no rain. Heat inversion caused the visibility to be only fair during the period of 26 Mar 69 to 30 Mar 69. The reduced visibility was an asset on the Laotian border. Temperatures ranged from the mid 90's to 105° F during the period. Throughout the operation the weather in the pass east of Khe Sanh and running east by northeast was characterized by low clouds and fog which lasted until mid morning each day. This condition hindered any aircraft from entering the area of operations prior to 1000 hrs. During the last two weeks, the weather turned cool and several rain storms created trafficability problems in the mountainous areas.

(2) Operation Maine Crag: Based on the reports of heavy enemy vehicular traffic along Route 926, and the reports of possible tracked vehicle movements in the area, the 3d Marine Division launched Operation Maine Crag on 15 March 1969. Operation Maine Crag was designed to be a regimental size search and clear operation along the eastern portion of Route 926 and around the Laotian Salient in Quang Tri Province. The 3d Marine Regt landed on LZs Saigon (XD815275), Paris (XD808236), Hanoi (XD302310) and Sparrow (YD050648). The Marines moved east along Route 926 searching for possible enemy storage and assembly areas trying to find where all of the traffic along Route 926 had terminated.

(3) Mission: The mission of TF Remagen was to open Route 9 to Khe Sanh, cut Route 926 in support of the 3d Marine Regiment's operation Maine Crag, protect the 3d Marine Regiment from an attack by an enemy armor thrust from Laos, conduct reconnaissance in force operations on the Khe Sanh Plain and to conduct strike operations as directed by Task Force Hotel.

(4) Concept of operation:

(a) Task Force Remagen was to stage at Ca Lu (YD015455) on 16 March and beginning on the morning of 17 March the Task Force was to move west opening Route 9 to Khe Sanh. The move to Khe Sanh was to be a deliberate move with the scouts and engineers clearing the road of mines and obstacles, the main infantry securing the high ground along the route, and the artillery displacing as needed to cover the lead elements of the Task Force. After the lead elements opened the route the tank company and command group were to proceed through to Khe Sanh. From Ca Lu to Khe Sanh 21.9 Km of Route 9 is nothing but a turning, twisting road cut out of the side of a steep ridgeline. In short, 21.9 Km of Route 9 is perfect ambush country and TF Remagen was not going to take any chances. After arriving at Khe Sanh the Task Force was to proceed south as rapidly as possible to cut Route 926 and protect the exposed flank and rear of the 3d Marine Regt from any possible enemy armor thrust from Laos. Because of the need to get astride Route 926 rapidly the Task Force would have to move along the relatively easy terrain at the base of the Co Roc. Once astride Route 926

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TF Remagen was to conduct search and clear operations south of the highway and along the Laotian border.

(b) Another objective of Task Force Remagen was to give the enemy cause to think about the vulnerability of any equipment or units that he might try and move from Laos into Quang Tri using the main avenues of approach into the province. By demonstrating the ability of a mech/armor force to operate in the difficult terrain around and to the south of Khe Sanh the enemy would not only realize the vulnerability of his infiltration routes, but ~~also~~ the vulnerability of his main lines of communications in Laos to an armored thrust would also become quite apparent.

(c) It was decided that TF Remagen would operate at Khe Sanh without a ground line of communications. Because of the length of the road from Ca Lu to Khe Sanh, the distance that the Task Force planned to move from Khe Sanh while operating in the area, and the limited combat power available to the task force it was decided not to waste combat power on the security of resupply operations. All resupply to include all gas, oil and replacement parts for the vehicles was to be accomplished by air.

### (5) Execution:

(a) At 0600 hrs on 17 March TF Remagen departed Ca Lu for Khe Sanh. The scout platoon of the 1st Bn, 77th Armor supported by the attached engineer platoon, ~~demers~~ and AVLB's led the way. Progress was slow but steady as bypasses around destroyed bridges were constructed, AVLB's were used repeatedly to span washouts and fallen bridges and the road was swept for mines. The scouts reached XD921419 at 2015 hrs and established a night defensive position at that location. At 180600H March the scouts and engineers resumed their operations westward. D Company, 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M) simultaneously displaced from Ca Lu and moved to secure the high ground vic XD935410. At 1530 hrs Btry C, 1st Bn, 40th Artillery (105 SP) displaced from Ca Lu to XD921419 to provide fire support for the Task Force elements which now extended along Route 9 from XD913403 east to Ca Lu. By nightfall, the scout platoon had crossed the last barrier to traffic and spent the night on the Khe Sanh Plateau. Their arrival on the plateau marked the reopening of Route 9 for armored traffic. A prodigious amount of engineering effort had been required in the first two days. Thirteen (13) bypasses were constructed, the AVLB's had been launched and recovered six (6) times, and enemy anti-tank mines were discovered and destroyed in two locations along the route. C Company, 1st Bn, 77th Armor began moving west on Route 9 at 190800H Mar 69. The Task Force Command Group and combat trains followed C/1-77 Armor. The march went without incident, and all Task Force elements had closed on the plateau within five (5) hours. Lead elements of the Task Force reached Khe Sanh by noon, where they were visited by LTG Stillwall, XXIV Corps Commander.

(b) On 20 March TF Remagen moved through the abandoned Special Forces camp at Lang Voi (XD795363) and then turned south along the Laotian border toward Highway 926. At 1520 hrs on 25 March Tm C linked up with A/1-3 Marines in the vicinity of Highway 926 and established a night position at XD777236. The battalion 4.2" mortar platoon and the engineers displaced to

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XD799255 to support the teams. Team C placed an ambush at the point where Highway 926 enters South Vietnam after crossing the Xe Pon River. This ambush engaged 3 to 5 enemy moving through the ford site and the enemy returned fire. A search of the area the following morning revealed blood trails and two 82mm mortar rounds were found at XD780242.

(c) From 26-29 March 1969, both teams conducted extensive search and destroy operations north and south of Route 926 from the Laotian border to the vicinity of the Laotian Salient. Approximately 100 square kilometers were searched with negative results. Highway 926 was found to be a good dry highway for wheeled vehicles. Observation of the Laotian side of the river revealed numerous huts, bunkers and trails. On the night of 29 Mar Team C started north back to Khe Sanh.

(d) At 300720H Mar 69, Team B and the battalion mortar platoon began moving north. They were attacked at 0836 hrs vicinity XD778239 by an unknown sized enemy force. One tank was damaged by an anti-tank mine, and another was struck by an RPG. Team B returned the fire and swept the area. Three (3) enemy bodies were found. Team B suffered three (3) wounded in action and both damaged tanks were repaired in their field locations. Team C had sent a tank platoon, preceded by a mine sweep team, in reaction to Team B's firefight. Following the minesweep team, the lead tank struck what was estimated to be two Chinese Communist plastic AT mines stacked one on top of the other. The detonation blew sections of tank track 300 meters from the vehicle, and left a crater seven feet in diameter by four feet deep. While securing the damaged tank, and sweeping the area, Team C discovered and destroyed a large enemy cache at XD790255. The cache contained the following:

82mm mortar rounds	1120 with fuzes
60mm mortar rounds	218 with fuzes
75mm recoilless rifle rounds	86
51 cal MG rounds	3500
37mm rounds	20
7.62mm rounds	1500
RPG boosters	25
Chicom Lt MG	1
AK-47 ammunition	3400
RPG-2	2
Chicom grenades	2
Mount, 51 cal MG	2
Gas Mask	300
Plastic anti-tank mine	1

Team B passed through Team C and moved north to a night position at XD765292 while Team C secured the badly damaged tank. The following morning (310615H Mar 69) Team B took approximately 100 rds of 82mm mortar, resulting in one (1) friendly KIA and six (6) WIA. Counterbattery fire from C/1-40 Arty was placed on the suspected mortar position in Laos and the enemy ceased fire at 0654 hrs. At 0855 hrs Team C took three (3) rounds of 82mm from the Laotian side of the river but there were no casualties. At 1215 hrs, Team C came under mortar and RPG fire. A VTR from D Company, 1-77 Armor took a RPG

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direct hit, detonating six (6) LAMs stored inside resulting in one (1) KIA, four (4) WIA, and a total loss of the VML. Team C returned fire with tank guns, suppressing the enemy fire.

(e) From 2 through 6 April 1969 the Task Force was involved in extracting the damaged vehicles and in relocating back to the vicinity of Khe Sanh where extensive maintenance was performed. It must be remembered that all of the replacement parts, to include tracks and power packs, had to be delivered by air.

(f) On 7 April the Task Force moved north to conduct a reconnaissance in force toward LZ Alpine (XD755530) with Tm C while Tm B conducted search and clear operations west-northwest of the Khe Sanh airfield. By being able to move from Khe Sanh to Alpine the armor/mech force demonstrated that armor is capable of getting astride all three of the main routes of infiltration into Quang Tri Province from Laos.

(g) On 9 April an accident occurred at Vandergrift Combat Base. Late in the afternoon a Marine CH-46 crashed and burned placing the Division's forward logistical support area (LSA) out of operation. The LSA at Vandergrift was the sole means of support for TF Remagen, the 3d Marine Regt and the 4th Marine Regt. The LSA remained closed on the 10th and did not reopen until 11 April. Operations by TF Remagen were able to continue unabated.

(h) On the night of 10 April 1969, after the LSA had been closed all day, C/L-77 Arty secured by the battalion headquarters tank section and the scout platoon moved to XD811369 and conducted an artillery raid. Targets consisted of 40 to 50 vehicle light vic XD780280, vehicle lights at XD761328, XD772318, and grids XD770310 and XD770300. The battery fired 1149 HE, 95 WP, and 70 VT rounds. There were 45 secondary explosions, including 6 large flashes. One large fire was started.

(i) On 11 April the 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M) relieved the 1st Bn, 77th Armor as the control headquarters of TF Remagen. At 1345 hrs the command group, scout platoon, mortar platoon and support elements of the 1st Bn, 77th Armor departed Khe Sanh and after a 97.6 Km road march the last elements arrived at LZ Nancy at 2030 hrs. When the 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M) arrived at Khe Sanh it brought with it A/L-61 Inf (M), A/L-77 Armor, the scout and mortar platoons of the 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M), a self propelled 155mm howitzer battery (3 howitzers) and two (2) Marine 8 inch howitzers. The 8 inch howitzers broke down before they reached Ca Lu and A/L-77 Armor had to drag them to Khe Sanh after dark.

(j) After arrival at Khe Sanh A/L-61 Inf (M) moved toward LZ Alpine to conduct search and clear operations south of the LZ while B/L-61 Inf (M) and C/L-77 Armor conducted search and clear operations in the vicinity of Khe Sanh. On the 13th A/L-77 Armor began to move directly south from Khe Sanh toward LZ Saigon (XD815275) and Route 926 attempting to find a way through the mountainous terrain that would allow the Task Force to move between Route 926 and Khe Sanh without moving along the base of the Co Bao.

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(k) While A/1-77 Armor moved south the remainder of the Task Force made a dash for the Laotian border. Employing TAG air, artillery and advancing directly west from Khe Sanh the mech/armor force moved toward the border attempting to make the enemy believe that his lines of communications in Laos were in danger, and that he would be attacked in his sanctuary. The enemy did not react to the feint.

(l) On 15 April B/1-61 Inf (M) and C/1-77 Armor departed Khe Sanh for LZ Sharon and LZ Nancy respectively. As the companies reached Ca Lu the columns split. All inoperable vehicles were moved along Route 9 to Dong Ha and then down Route 1 to their final destination while the remainder of the companies moved through the newly opened Ba Long Valley road. As B/1-61 Inf (M) and C/1-77 Armor departed Khe Sanh the two (2) 8 inch howitzers that had accompanied TF 1-61 Inf (M) on its move to Khe Sanh were returned to Vandergrift Combat Base.

(m) On 19 April the 2d Troop, 7th ARVN Cav, reinforced by the Recon Co, 1st ARVN Regt moved from Camp Evans to Ca Lu. The following day the ARVN moved to Khe Sanh and was placed under the operational control of TF Remagen. After arriving at Khe Sanh the ARVN conducted search and clear operations north of the airfield and then west toward the Laotian border.

(n) On 21 April A/1-77 Armor reached Highway 926. After spending the night astride the highway, A/1-77 Armor returned to LZ Saigon while A/1-61 Inf (M) moved through the tank company, turned east on Highway 926 and conducted search and clear operations near the Laotian Salient in the vicinity of XD885225.

(o) On the 23rd the elements of TF Remagen that had been working along Highway 926 began their move back to Khe Sanh. The last element returned to Khe Sanh on 24 April and the Task Force performed maintenance in preparation for its scheduled move to LZ Sharon on 26 April.

(p) At 0330 hours on 25 April an estimated NVA battalion attacked the 2d Troop, 7th ARVN Cav which was located at XD012410. The attack started with a heavy mortar barrage which lasted for about one hour (one mortar round landed near the FDC track of C/1-40 Arty killing the battery executive officer and wounding every man in the FDC). Following the mortar fire the enemy attacked the ARVN position using RPG's, small arms fire, automatic weapons fire, flamethrowers and small satchel charges. At 0600 hours the enemy broke contact leaving behind 33 NVA KIA. A further search of the area resulted in the capture of 12 AK-47's, four (4) B-40 launchers, one (1) B-41 launcher, two (2) IEDs, one (1) bangalore torpedo, two (2) pole charges, 50 Chicom grenades, 300 satchel charges and one (1) flamethrower. Friendly casualties were: eight (8) ARVN KIA, 40 ARVN WIA, one (1) Australian advisor KIA, two (2) US advisors WIA, two (2) US KIA, and three (3) US WIA. Three (3) ARVN personnel carriers were destroyed and one (1) tank from A/1-77 Armor was damaged.

(q) The move from Khe Sanh was postponed until 28 April to allow Task Force Remagen time to conduct a thorough search for the enemy. At 0300 hrs on the 28th the enemy attacked once again. This time the main attack was

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directed against Co A, 1st Bn, 61st Inf (M) which was located at XD845390. The company was alerted just prior to the start of the attack by a listening post which sprung an ambush on the enemy as they were moving into position. The enemy attack was supported by RPG, mortar, small arms and automatic weapons fire. Throwing satchel charges and using flame devices the enemy charged from the southwest but was unable to penetrate the perimeter. At approximately 0510 hrs the enemy broke contact and disappeared into the night. While A/1-61 Inf (M) was under attack both 2/7 ARVN and the Task Force CP were probed by the enemy ground forces. 2/7 ARVN moved to A/1-61 Inf's location and swept the area. The day was spent attempting to regain contact and at 1100 hrs C/1-11 Inf was air assaulted into an LZ near the Khe Sanh airfield. Contact was not re-established.

1. Friendly casualties were five (5) KIA and 35 WIA. In addition, two (2) 105mm SP howitzers and one M548 cargo carrier were damaged while one (1) M113A1 personnel carrier, one (1) M40A3 tank, one (1) water trailer and one (1) M548 were destroyed. (one of the M548s was loaded with 105mm ammunition which exploded causing most of the friendly casualties).

2. The enemy lost 34 NVA KIA and abandoned the following equipment: 15 AK-47s, one (1) RPD, two (2) RPG-2s, 500 satchel charges and 76 RPG rounds.

(r) Enemy units involved in the contacts of 25 and 28 April have been identified as elements of the 57th and 9th Regts, 304th NVA Div.

(s) At 0700 hrs on 29 April TF Remagen began its move from Khe Sanh back to its home base. Because of the enemy attacks on the 25th and 28th it was anticipated that the enemy had mined the road from Khe Sanh to Ca Lu and that he might try and attack the Task Force while it was on the road. The move to Ca Lu was slow and careful but by 1216 hrs the lead element had reached Ca Lu without incident and by 2150 hrs the last vehicle returned to LZ Sharon, a distance of 80 grueling kilometers.

(6) Logistics: Because the bridges behind TF Remagen were removed the operation was a test of the ability to resupply, and keep an armored force operable without the use of ground lines of communications. The Brigade established a forward support element (FSE) at Vandergrift Combat Base where supplies and repair parts were assembled for shipment by helicopter to TF Remagen. Both battalions maintained combat trains with TF Remagen which consisted of tracked maintenance and resupply vehicles, the majority of the mechanics and a portion of the battalion supply section. At Vandergrift, with the FSE, the battalions maintained their PLL personnel and most of the remainder of their supply sections.

(a) All types of Class I were available at Vandergrift. Sundry packs were issued on the basis of one (1) pack per 100 men every two (2) days. The USMC Class I point issued one (1) A-ration meal per day. Because of the difficulty of distributing A-rations, C-rations were used about 90% of the time.

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(b) Class III was available, except for some special items such as OH-0 (cherry juice) and ISA (lubricating oil, semi-fluid), in large containers. By anticipating requirements, sufficient quantities of packaged POL were ordered from Brigade stocks to meet demands as they arose. Five-hundred gallon rubber drums were used to carry 75,000 gallons of fuel to the maneuver elements.

(c) There was no difficulty in drawing ammunition. The Brigade S-4 and the Marine Logistics Support Unit (LSU) Commander arranged an ammunition accountability transfer that enabled the TF Remagen S-4 to draw Class V quickly. Specialized items such as 40mm anti-aircraft (cluster), M-79, claymores, and hand flares were not available in large quantities but could be ordered through the LSU. Non-emergency delivery was normally made 1-2 days after ordering. The 105mm battery fired over 7,000 rounds and the 60mm mortars fired approximately 4,000 rounds during the first three weeks of the operation.

(d) The USMC ISA scheduling system for helicopter logistical support caused the greatest logistical problem. Helicopters were not dedicated to the support of TF Remagen and the ISA scheduling system requires precise locations and times for delivery the afternoon before the supplies are to be delivered. With all units maneuvering, it was extremely difficult to comply with the ISA system. A better resupply system would have been for the USMC to apply all helicopter support to its priorities until TF Remagen was in a position to be resupplied; then concentrate on TF Remagen needs until completed. With an average of 30 minutes per round trip, four (4) heavy lift (HH-47) helicopters could have met TF Remagen's average daily resupply requirements in 1½ hours. In addition a Brigade UH-1 was used daily for retail distribution of the parts, mail and meals from the combat trains areas to the users.

(e) Second echelon maintenance support was available from the combat trains and a contact team from D Company, 75th Support Battalion was in the field during most of the operation to provide direct support. In addition the Brigade provided repair parts and direct support maintenance for the 2d Troop, 7th ARVN Cav. While operating under combat conditions, the maintenance teams performed all required functions to include the pulling of power packs to adjust or replace them.

(f) Following is a summary of the logistical activities required to support TF Remagen. It must be remembered that all resupply, to include replacement parts such as power packs, was accomplished by air.

#### CLASS I

Meals	93 pallets (55,662 meals)
Sundry packs	96

#### CLASS III

Mogas	19,550 gallons
Diesel	56,450 gallons

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## CLASS III

OE 50	865 gallons
OE 30	980 gallons
OE 10	330 gallons
Drake fluid	45 gallons
GAL	110 gallons
ISA	56 gallons
GO 90	90 gallons
Hydraulic fluid	71 gallons

## CLASS V

105mm	8,883 rounds
81mm	4,677 rounds
4.2"	2,338 rounds
90mm tank	522 rounds
.50 cal	59,200 rounds
7.62mm	174,000 rounds
40mm	5760 rounds
Hand flares	624
Frag grenades	606
155mm	1,044 rounds
8"	400 rounds
40mm (duster)	12,256 rounds

CLASS IX: Items listed below are items that were replaced. This does not include items that were "pulled" and adjusted or repaired in the field.

## L-77 Armor (16 Mar - 11 Apr)

## GRAND TOTALS

### TANKS

Engine	3	3
Transmission	2	2
Starter	1	1
Track	3 sets	3
Comp Idler Arm	1	1

### M00

R/final drive	2	2
Track	2 sets	2
Generator	1	1
Comp Idler Arm	1	1

## L-77 Armor (16 Mar - 11 Apr)

## L-61 Mech (12 Apr - 28 Apr)\*

M 113A1/M577A1

M113A1/M577A1

Engine	3
Track	6 sets
Transmission	0
Final Drive	1

Engine	6	9
Track	7 sets	13
Transmission	4	4
Final Drive	3	4

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1-77 Armor (16 Mar - 11 Apr)

M 106A1

Engine 1

1-61 Mech (12 Apr - 20 Apr).

M 106A1

Engine 1 2

M 125A1

Engine 1 1

Transmission 1 1

\* Vehicles not repaired by 20 April were evacuated with the move of the Task Force to LZ Sharon.

(7) For forty-seven (47) days an armor/mech force had operated in the northwestern mountains of South Vietnam along the Laotian border. Except for the early morning hours of 25 and 20 April no major battles were fought, but the 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (M) had proved that armor can operate in difficult terrain over extended distances without a ground line of communications. In moving at will from Alpine to Route 926 along the Laotian border Task Force Remagen has given the enemy cause for concern. The enemy's lines of communications in Laos are vulnerable. A tank infantry force, which is totally supplied by air and therefore not subject to being destroyed by cutting off its logistical tail, could enter Laos, move to Route 92 then turn south and strike along the "Ho Chi Minh Trail".

c. Montana Mauler (22 March - 2 April): By 22 March available information indicated that elements of the 27th NVA Regt were again operating in the area in which the battle of Cam Hung had been fought earlier in the month. During the period 15-22 March the Cam Lo (YD128595) area and Route 9 from Cam Lo to Vandegrift Combat Base (YD000490) experienced a significant increase in enemy activity which was characterized by minings, harassing mortar fire, RPG fire, small arms fire and numerous enemy sightings. The nature of the enemy activities indicated that the 27th Regt probably had the mission of interdicting Route 9. To determine the enemy situation and attempt to eliminate the enemy threat to Route 9 a reconnaissance in force operation was to be conducted by TF 3-5 Cav. TF 3-5 Cav was to move through the Kho Chua Valley searching the draws, conducting reconnaissance by fire, and attempting to gain contact with elements of the 27th NVA Regt that were believed to be operating in the area. The general trace of the reconnaissance in force was to be as follows: YD143616, YD040620, YD000600, XD965595, XD900570, and XD905545.

(1) Operation Montana Mauler began on 22 March when TF 3-5 Cav departed C2 and headed through the Kho Chua Valley. Initially Montana Mauler was a reconnaissance in force operation in which a cavalry squadron using two armored cavalry troops, a combat engineer platoon and two light infantry platoons searched for the enemy, located him and developed the situation for the Brigade. Once the situation had been developed the Brigade then committed two light infantry battalions (one US and one ARVN) to assault the enemy's position and destroy him in place. As the infantry closed with the enemy the cavalry withdrew from the area of immediate contact and moved

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around the friendly forces to the opposite side of the battle area to assume a screening mission in order to protect the infantry battalions from enemy attacks launched from within the DMZ.

(2) During the first two days of the operation enemy contact was frequent but sporadic. On the third day TF 3-5 Cav encountered the primary defensive positions of the enemy. Two (2) companies were entrenched in camouflaged bunkers at YD046624 and YD041616 with a light screening force established between the two positions. I/3-9 Marines air assaulted into the battle during the afternoon and was placed OPCON to TF 3-5 Cav. Fighting was heavy on the 24th until the late afternoon when the enemy, now estimated to be a battalion in strength, began to diminish his attacks. During the evening of 24 March it was decided that the situation had been sufficiently developed by TF 3-5 Cav to commit two (2) companies and the battalion headquarters of the 1st Bn, 11th Inf to the fight.

(3) During the afternoon of 25 March A and B Companies and the battalion headquarters of the 1st Bn, 11th Inf air assaulted into an LZ on the high ground north of the previous day's battle (YD043623). The battalion (-) landed without incident and throughout the day contact was light and sporadic for both battalions. The lack of contact in the valley on 25 March gave cause to suspect that the NVA had moved north. Accordingly plans were made for the 1st Bn, 11th Inf (-), with I/3-9 Marines OPCON, to move north to regain contact.

(4) 26 March turned out to be the first of four (4) days of heavy fighting for the 1st Bn, 11th Inf. At 0330 hrs the battalion was attacked by small arms, automatic weapons, RPG's and mortar fire from the north, west and east. At 0800 hrs the battalion jumped off in the attack and almost immediately contact was gained. Airstrikes and artillery pounded the enemy positions, but with each pass the fighter aircraft received a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire and the enemy refused to budge. After expending great difficulty with the enemy and the heat (the first time since October that the weather had been hot; 105° F) the 1-11 Inf returned to their positions of the previous night and prepared to resume the attack on the 27th.

(5) The 1st Bn, 11th Inf began to attack north at 0715 hrs on 27 March. A and B Co's met strong resistance but by noon the enemy had been rooted out of his bunkers on the intermediate objective and C/1-11 Inf was air assaulted into a position north of the main enemy position (Hill 208 at YD043544).

(a) As C/1-11 Inf air assaulted into their LZ it was immediately brought under intense enemy mortar fire from the northwest. The company commander was wounded and evacuated and the mortar attack did not stop until airstrikes could be placed on the mortar positions.

(b) During the afternoon A and B Co's pressed on and seized their objectives, but the enemy immediately counterattacked each company. By 1717 hrs the enemy attacks were repulsed but the price had been high. B Co lost all of its officers, except for its FO who commanded the company throughout the afternoon. At 1800 hrs the two platoons of D/1-11 Inf that had been with the 3d Sqdn, 5th Cav moved to reinforce B/1-11 Inf.

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(c) The day had cost the 1st Bn, 11th Inf 13 KIA, one (1) KCS KIA and 30 WIA. Enemy casualties for the day were 120 NVA KIA.

(6) 28 March was devoted to cleaning up small pockets of enemy resistance, resupply and reorganization. Although no major engagements took place the casualties remained high. The 1st Bn, 11th Inf suffered one (1) KIA and 45 WIA while 60 NVA were killed.

(a) Since the 26th the 3-5 Cav had remained in the Khe Chua Valley. On the 28th the Squadron was given the mission of moving to the right flank of the battle area to be in a position on the 29th to support C/1-11 Inf on Hill 208 (YD043644). The cavalry moved into position, and during the night A Troop received two (2) probing attacks.

(b) During the course of the battle on 28 March it became evident that the Brigade did not have the forces in the battle area to completely encircle the enemy and prevent his escape. Coordination was made with the 2d ARVN Regt, 1st ARVN Div and it was decided to commit the 1st Bn, 2d ARVN Regt to the operation. Plans called for the battalion to be air assaulted on to Hill 262 (YD031644) during the morning of 29 March in an attempt to block escape routes.

(7) 29 March was the last day of heavy fighting.

(a) Action was initiated when D/1-11 Inf, moving to secure a position in support of an air assault by I/3-9 Marines, was engaged by an NVA force in a bunker complex. Nontoxic riot control agents, airstrikes and small arms fires were used to root the enemy out of his positions. While the air assault of I/3-9 Marines was in progress elements of A/1-11 Inf, which had been moving north along a ridge (YD036635), came under heavy counterattack by an estimated NVA Co. The enemy attacked from the north and attempted to cut off the lead platoon. As B/1-11 moved to reinforce A Co both companies came under heavy mortar attack. The enemy attack was beaten off, but throughout the remainder of the day the 1st Bn, 11th Inf continued to receive sporadic mortar fire.

(b) The planned air assault of hill 262 by the 1st Bn, 2d ARVN Regt was changed and the 1st and 3d companies landed on an LZ at YD063646 while the 2d and 4th companies landed on an LZ at YD067655. After landing, 1-2 ARVN moved toward the southern boundary of the DMZ in an attempt to cut off the enemy escape routes. Only sporadic contact was made by the ARVN battalion during the day.

(c) Results for 29 March were: 19 friendly WIA, 45 enemy KIA and two (2) enemy 82mm mortars destroyed.

(8) On the 30th and 31st of March the 1st Bn, 11th Inf searched the battle area while 1-2 ARVN moved to and searched along the southern edge of the DMZ west of Con Thien from YD055685 to YD035675. TF 3-5 Cav, reinforced by the 3d Co, 2d Bn, 2d ARVN Regt screened the northern flank of the battle area and maintained a one troop reaction force at Con Thien. Significant ground contact was not reestablished by the 1st Bn, 11th Inf or the 3d Sqdn,

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5th Cav but at 1102 hours via YD026665 the 2d and 4th Co's 1st Bn, 2d ARVN Regt made contact with an estimated enemy Co (-). The enemy broke contact at 1530 hrs leaving 15 dead behind; the ARVN suffered no friendly KIA's.

(9) The last two days of Operation Montana Mauler, 1 and 2 April, were without contact. The 1st Bn, 11th Inf conducted search and clear operations back over the battle area moving east-southeast looking for bypassed enemy positions and personnel. 1-2 ARVN continued its search along the southern boundary of the DMZ and then joined TF 1-11 Inf and searched the northern half of the battle area. TF 3-5 Cav continued to screen the northern flank.

(10) During Operation Montana Mauler the 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (M) had been in contact with at least two battalions of the 27th IVA Regt. Documents captured during Operation Montana Mauler identified the 3d and 4th Co's 1st Bn, and 2d and 3d Co's 3d Bn, 27th IVA Regt. The losses suffered by the 27th Regt have greatly reduced the combat effectiveness of the Regt and indications are that the Regt has returned to North Vietnam. Since the completion of Operation Montana Mauler enemy initiated incidents in the Cam Lo area and along Hwy 9 have significantly decreased.

## (11) Results:

### (a) Friendly Casualties:

	ARMY	USMC	ARVN	CUMULATIVE
KIA	21 (KCS)	1	0	22
WIA	150	11	10	171
DOW	2	0	0	2

### (b) Enemy Casualties:

- (1) Cumulative: KIA: 274, PW: 0, CIVDEF: 0, HOI CHANH: 0, IWC: 31, CSWC: 17
- (2) Inflicted by US Forces: KIA: 246, PW: 0, CIVDEF: 0, HOI CHANH: 0, IWC: 17, CSWC: 6
- (3) Inflicted by ARVN: KIA: 28, PW: 0, CIVDEF: 0, HOI CHANH: 0, IWC: 14, CSWC: 11

f. Ellis Ravine (8 April - 15 April): On 8 April the 1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div (M) began a combined search and clear, and road building operation in the Da Long Valley west of Quang Tri City. The operation was conducted in coordination and cooperation with the 1st and 2d ARVN Regts and lasted until 15 April.

(1) Elements of the Brigade that participated in the operation were the 1st Bn, 11th Inf and the 3d Squadron, 5th Cav. The 1st Bn, 11th Inf was reinforced by the addition of one Cav Troop (A/4-12 Cav) and an engineer platoon (Reinf) from the organic Brigade Engineer Company (A/7 Engr), while the 3d Sqdn, 5th Cav consisted of A and B Troops 3-5 Cav, D/1-11 Inf and a reinforced engineer platoon from A/7 Engr.

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(2) TF 3-5 Cav moved to Ca Lu (YD015455) on 7 April and began operations into the valley from the west. TF 1-11 Inf departed LZ Sharon on 8 April and entered the valley from the east. The task forces conducted reconnaissance in force and search and clear operations designed to destroy the enemy and his caches in the valley. As the battalions moved into the valley they built a road from Phuoc Mon (YD300469) to Ca Lu. On 11 April the engineer platoons opened the road to tracked vehicles but much work remained to be done before the road was passable to wheeled vehicles. On 13 April TF 3-5 Cav departed the valley for operations in "Leatherneck Square" and TF 1-11 Inf remained in the valley until 15 April when the road had been made passable to wheeled vehicles. The only enemy contact during the operation by elements of the Brigade was made on 13 April when 2 D/1-11 Inf spotted two (2) VC on a trail and killed one of them.

(3) While the Bde was building the road the 2d ARVN Regt landed one battalion at LZ Holcomb (YD119432) and conducted search and clear operations in the mountains north of the Da Long valley (See Inclosure 6). South of the valley the 1st ARVN Regt landed one battalion at LZ Davis-Hill (YD253290) and conducted search and clear operations toward the north. No major contacts were gained by either Regiment.

(4) Ellis Ravine had not resulted in the destruction of any enemy forces or caches, but an alternate supply route was opened between Quang Tri Combat Base and Vandergrift Combat Base.

g. Summary: During the reporting period the Brigade proved that a Mechanized Infantry Brigade is capable of operating in rough terrain without ground lines of communications, fighting main force NVA Regiments and working closely with the GVN forces in the pacification effort. Total results for the reporting period were:

Enemy KIA: 581 (426 NVA, 155 VC)

Enemy POW: 30 (12 NVA, 18 VC)

Hoi Chanh: 7 (4 at Khe Sanh)

Individual Weapons Captured: 132

Crew Served Weapons Captured: 19

Civil Defendants: 20

2. SECTION III - LESSONS LEARNED:

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a. Personnel: None

b. Operations:

(1) Enemy mining:

(a) Observation: Plastic mines have taken a heavy toll in damaged vehicles and casualties. Enemy mining usually follows recent use of a road or trail.

(b) Evaluation: It is not always feasible to conduct deliberate mine sweep operations in front of an armored column due to the resultant delay. Even with mine detection equipment, it is very difficult to insure that all of the mines have been located. A strong contributor to mine damage is repassage over an area within a short time span. The enemy observes armored movement and can assume that the force will be required to retrace its steps. When this is so, he mines in the probable area of travel.

(c) Recommendation: Armor movement should be planned to avoid using the same route more than once during an operation. If the route must be used more than once, there should be ambushes or other forms of security placed along the road to prevent enemy mining incidents, or the road must be swept again. Wherever possible, armored vehicles should not double back on their old tracks.

(2) Tactical Dozers:

(a) Observation: Dozers were used in support of armor operations to construct pioneer roads concurrent with the movement of the main body of tanks, APCs and self-propelled artillery, or to construct tactical crossings where obstacles halt cross country movement. Road construction is often not established as a separate effort preceding or following tactical operations.

(b) Evaluation: In the above role, the dozers are expected to maneuver with the tanks and APCs but the standard engineer dozer is not capable of traveling at the speed of a tank. The CEV and the dozer tank are capable of traveling with the tanks and personnel carriers but they have proven to be unreliable, and the blade of both is relatively unmaneuverable.

(c) Recommendation: It is recommended that an armored dozer be developed that is capable of traveling at the speed of armored vehicles over extended distances, and performing earth moving tasks similar to those of a standard bulldozer.

(3) Employment of Improved Conventional Munitions (ICM) on Seismic Intrusion Device (SID) Detected Targets:

(a) Observation: The employment of ICM on SID detected targets has proven to be an extremely effective means of engaging the enemy.

(b) Evaluation: During this reporting period, the use of ICM on SID

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detected targets has produced seventeen (17) confirmed enemy KIAs. The key to the employment of this munition lies in the ability of the firing element to place accurate and timely fires on the target area within seconds after the enemy is detected. The computation of firing data for this type of munition is time consuming, thus timely fires can be delivered only if data is computed prior to activation of SID.

(c) Recommendation: It is recommended that data for the use of ICM on SID detected targets be recomputed each time a meteorological message is received by the fire direction center. By using this method of computing firing data, fires have been placed on SID detected targets in as little as eighteen (18) seconds.

(4) Addition of a Fourth Firing Battery to the DS Artillery Battalion:

(a) Observation: During the nine months this Brigade has been in Vietnam the need for additional organic artillery support has been apparent.

(b) Evaluation: During the nine months this Brigade has been in Vietnam, it has been habitually responsible for areas of operations which have been too large to be covered completely by three organic 155mm (SP) Howitzer batteries. By careful selection of firing positions it has been possible to maintain mutual fire support between adjacent firing batteries, but the massing of fires of all three DS batteries has proven unattainable. Normally this Brigade has organic, attached or operational control of from four to six battalion size maneuver elements. As a result the DS artillery battalion normally controls the fires of from four to six batteries of artillery. The additional batteries of artillery are normally provided from XXIV Corps Artillery resources. Due to the nature of this low-intensity conflict, maneuvering forces are often employed as independent platoon, squad and fire team size elements. This increases the amount of area covered, requires forward observer teams below company level and increases the requirement for DS artillery fires. In addition to the responsibilities inherent to the DS artillery mission, direct support artillery fire is provided in Vietnam on an area basis to ARVN units, RF and PF units, Combined Action Groups, Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols, Ranger Teams and Special Forces Teams.

(c) Recommendation: That a fourth organic firing battery, preferably a 105mm towed battery, be added to the DS artillery battalion. This would provide the Brigade with organic, helicopter liftable artillery for support of its foot-mobile infantry battalion. The addition of a fourth firing battery would not require any significant augmentation of personnel or equipment authorized the HQ and service battery of the DS artillery battalion.

(5) Tactical Fords:

(a) Observation: When moving mechanized forces through difficult terrain, or constructing a tank-trail, a tactical ford is an excellent method of crossing streams or dry gaps.

(b) Evaluation: Bridging and culverts are both difficult to transport on tactical operations and relatively vulnerable to enemy action and rain once implaced. A simple method of overcoming this type of obstacle is to

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construct a tactical ford using locally available material. First, push large boulders or blast rock into the gap, then place smaller rock on top of the boulders. The large rock contains gaps which allows the water to flow through the ford, while the smaller rock provides a compact roadway for the vehicles. The tactical ford is less vulnerable to enemy action than a bridge or culvert, requires no transport prior to construction, and is less likely to wash out during heavy rains than either a bridge or a culvert. The tactical ford requires very little maintenance.

(c) Recommendation: When the proper materials are available, it is recommended that tactical fords, not bridges or culverts, be used in the construction of tank trails or obstacle crossings.

### (6) Performance of the M48A3 Tank:

(a) Observation: The M48A3 tank, as employed by the Brigade, has performed in an outstanding manner.

(b) Evaluation: During the reporting period, M48A3 tanks were issued to replace the M48A2C tank. The improved characteristics of the A3 were immediately obvious and gave the Brigade the capability to go places and do things not formerly possible with the A2C. With the increased cruising range over the gasoline driven A2C the unit was able to maneuver in the AO for up to four (4) days without fuel resupply. The power of the engine and the reliability of the power train permitted tanks to climb steep slopes, and maneuver in mountainous jungle terrain.

### c. Training: Training of Unit CBR Personnel:

(1) Observation: Turnover of personnel in Vietnam plus applications of chemical material not encountered in CONUS or Europe result in a lack of trained CBR personnel at unit level.

(2) Evaluation: Unit CBR officers and NCOs can be trained by chemical personnel at Brigade and Division level. The 86th Chemical Detachment assisted in conducting three, 8 hour unit chemical operations courses between the period 24 February to 4 April. Significant improvement in unit chemical operations, especially maintenance of CBR equipment, has been observed as a result of this training.

(3) Recommendation: That other organizations present similar courses to train unit CBR personnel. The program of instruction presented by the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division is included as inclosure 7.

### d. Intelligence: Aerial Photographs:

(1) Observation: Aerial photos were requested for upcoming operations on two different occasions. Each time they were requested seventy-two (72) hours prior to the time they were needed. On each occasion neither the readout of the photographs nor the photographs themselves were received until after the operation had begun.

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(2) Evaluation: It takes more than 72 hours for the read-out and photographs to be processed. It normally takes six days to receive any results.

(3) Recommendation: It is recommended that the Brigade be authorized to place requests for aerial photography directly to XXIV Corps, and that the resultant photography be sent directly to the Brigade MI detachment for read-out. This system would cut out several time consuming steps in the processing of aerial photographs and the read-out of the photography of the Brigade's MI detachment would insure that the information required by the Brigade was processed as rapidly as possible. If the above system can not be adopted then it is requested that the aerial photographic support system in northern I Corps be examined with a view toward shortening the time lapse between request and delivery of information.

### e. Logistics:

#### (1) Fuel Transfer Pump:

(a) Observation: Due to the requirements for resupply of fuel to a company that is some distance from the forward support area, a fuel tanker, with security, must be sent to that unit thus diluting the combat power of the unit involved. A more adequate system is needed for units that are isolated, or at a great distance from the forward support area. A gravity feed system was used by C/1-77 Armor during TF Remagen, but this system requires a VTR to lift the fuel bladder.

(b) Evaluation: An electrical pump system is required for transfer of fuel from a rubber fuel pod that has been airlifted to the using element.

(c) Recommendation: An electrical pump system be made for transfer of fuel from a rubber fuel pod that has been air lifted to the using element. This pump system can be made using a M113 bilge pump. Components needed to lubricate this pump are: Valve assy for the pod; hose assy rubber FSN: 4720-718-6020; hose assy rubber FSN 4720-718-6013; nozzle, fuel FSN 4930-902-4642; bilge pump FSN 2580-697-9643; toggle switch for cutting on and off; male connection to hose assembly to be welded to the bilge pump; and female connection FSN 4940-360-0711. The power to operate the pump can come from any vehicle.

#### (2) Use of 500 gallon POL bladder:

(a) Observation: The 500 gallon rubber POL bladder is easily damaged by aerial movement.

(b) Evaluation: The rubber POL bladder has heavy metal reinforcements at each end for lifting straps. If the filled bladder is slung by a strap on each end, the cylinder rotates in flight, often damaging the bladder.

(c) Recommendation: The filled bladder should be slung by attaching two lifting straps to the same end. This prevents rotation in flight and minimizes damage to the tank.

#### (3) Operations on sandy terrain:

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(a) Observation: While operating on sandy terrain near Wunder Beach in the Northern I Corps Tactical Zone, maintenance of tracked vehicles became a major problem due to an increase in suspension system component failures.

(b) Evaluation: Sandy Terrain and beaches cause track vehicle suspension systems to wear out much faster than normal operations. Normal P11 stocks are quickly depleted and suspension system repair parts become critical items. Complete replacement of road wheels and sprockets can be expected every 90-120 days (M113A1 sprockets must be replaced every 30-45 days).

(c) Recommendation: Units alerted to operate in sandy or beach areas should increase their ASL/P11 of suspension system repair parts. Increased attention to operator and organizational maintenance is also required.

f. Organization: None

g. Communications:

(1) FM Retransmission:

(a) Observation: During TF Remagen the Brigade was required to establish a FM retransmission station at FSB Cates. FSB Cates cannot be reached by vehicle and the retransmission unit had to be airlifted into position.

(b) Evaluation: Such a mission requires a lightweight, portable and sturdy mount for the AN/VRC 49. The mount must include a location for antennas and a power supply. The need for this type of mount is not limited to TF Remagen. On many airmobile operations a FM retransmission station has been established on remote Fire Support Bases, and in this AO the 3rd Marine Recon Bn (A LRRP Bn) is constantly establishing isolated retransmission stations on isolated hilltops.

(c) Recommendation: It is recommended that a mount for the AN/VRC 49 be developed that can be used as mentioned above, as well as in a vehicle.

(2) KAC Codes:

(a) Observation: The KAC codes now issued to Army units have proved impractical for troop use in the field.

(b) Evaluation: The small printing and slow decryption and encryption have caused units not to use the authentication/numerical code. Disenchantment with the published, approved codes has resulted in some units attempting to develop their own "shackle" codes. The use of such an insecure code is dangerous to unit security.

(c) Recommendation: It is recommended that an approved and simplified authentication/numerical code be developed to replace the KACs now in use.

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A fast, reliable, code suitable for use in helicopters and moving tracked vehicles, and legible under low ambient light conditions would materially improve communications security.

7 Incl - wd HQ, DA

~~1. Brigade Task Organization~~

~~2. Overlay: AG, 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div (Mech)~~

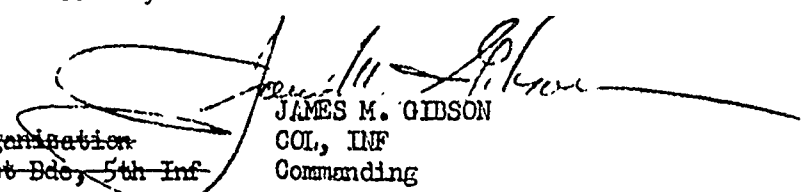
~~3. Overlay: Operation Cam Hung~~

~~4. Overlay: Operation Montana Mauler~~

~~5. Overlay: TF Romeo AO~~

~~6. Overlay: Operation Ellis Ravine~~

~~7. Program of Instruction - Unit Chemical Operations Course~~

  
JAMES M. GIBSON

COL, INF  
Commanding

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2 - CINCUSARPAC ATTN: GPOPODT APO 96558

2 - HQ, USARV ATTN: AVHGC-DST

3 - CG, XXIV Corps ATTN: G-3

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AVII-GGT (30 May 69) 1st Ind

SUBJECT: Operation Report - Lessons Learned for 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) for the Period Ending 30 April 1969.

DA, Headquarters, XXIV Corps, APO San Francisco 96308 11 May 1969

TO: Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, APO 96375

1. (U) The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech) Operational Report - Lessons Learned has been reviewed at this headquarters and is forwarded in accordance with USARV Regulation 525-15.

2. (C) Reference Section 1, Operations, Significant Activities. Paragraph e(11) (b) (2) page 19. Enemy losses inflicted by US Forces in Operation Montana Mauler are reported in the ORLL as 246 KIA, 17 individual and 6 crew served weapons captured. These figures represent only the task organization of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech). Total for the operation as reported by the 3d Marine Division is 300 enemy KIA, 36 individual and 7 crew served weapons captured.

3. (C) Except as noted below, HQ, XXIV Corps concurs without further comment on Commander's observation, evaluations, and recommendations listed in section 2 of the report. Comments follow:

a. Reference paragraph 2b(4) page 22. Nonconcur with recommendation to add a 105mm towed firing battery to the DS battalions.

(1) Addition of a 105mm towed battery would create a nonhomogenous organization that would increase the complexity of fire direction control, and burden the maintenance and supply system. This headquarters recognizes the occasional need for an airmobile artillery battery in the brigade AO. To meet this requirement, a Corps Artillery 105mm Towed Battery is habitually positioned in the 3d Marine Division AO to be available for such support.

(2) USACDC is conducting a study to determine the feasibility of adding a fourth firing battery to the divisional direct support artillery. This headquarters concurred in the proposal based on experience within XXIV Corps. One of the overriding reasons for this concurrence was the fact that the airmobile divisions have customarily had more maneuver battalions than accompanying direct support artillery batteries. This condition does not hold true in the 1/5th Mech. Many division operations in the western part of the AO, away from the coastal plains, dictates the use of airmobile artillery. In some cases, Corps Artillery self-propelled assets (light and medium) cannot be used because of the inaccessibility of the remote fire support bases. As a result the divisions have on occasion resorted to splitting batteries in an attempt to give artillery coverage to each maneuver element. When this is done, the overall effectiveness of the artillery is degraded, not to mention the command and control as well as supply problems

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AVII-GCT (30 May 69)

SUBJECT: Operation Report - Lessons Learned for 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry  
Division (Mech) for the Period Ending 30 April 1969

encountered. These problems are compensated for by the alternate solution of providing a Corps Artillery unit as mentioned above.

(3) The addition of a 155mm self-propelled battery would create additional problems in personnel, command and control, and logistical areas. The need for another battery to give a capability of massing fires in itself is not valid since targets are seldom acquired which justify the battalion method of attack. The provision of a fourth battery would not necessarily guarantee the capability of massing fires of two (2) or more batteries.

b. Reference paragraph d, page 23. Nonconcur in the Brigade solution to by-pass division and deal directly with XXIV Corps in requesting aerial photographs.

c. Reference paragraph 2e(1) (c) page 23. Concur with commander's recommendation with one exception. The electrical pump listed in the recommendation, i.e. bilge pump FSN 2580-697-9643, is a low capacity water pump not intended to pump fuel. An authorized pump assembly for use with the 500 gallon collapsible drums is described and illustrated in TM 10-1101, Petroleum Handling Equipment and Operations, paragraph 25. The pump can be requisitioned separately, if desired. It is pumping unit, fueling and defueling, 50GFM, electric motor driven, FSN 4930-889-1642.

d. Reference paragraph 2e(2) (c) page 24. Nonconcur, the 500 gallon collapsible drum is made of fabric impregnated with fuel resistant, synthetic rubber with metal closure plate on each end. Each has swivel ring with anchor shackles for hook out. The drum is designed for lifting by both ends simultaneously as described in TM 10-1101, paragraph 9, and TM 10-8110-201-15, Operator, Organizational, Field and Depot Maintenance Manual for the item. The strain of repeated sling out utilizing one closure plate is more than the drum was designed to stand. Using shorter slings, 12 feet rather than 16 feet models eliminates excessive in flight rotation. The only reason a drum might burst in flight by collapsing in the center would be failure to completely fill the drum so that it is rigid. Unit has been informed to fill drums, completely under pressure, to provide rigidity and continue using sling out attachment at both ends as intended by the designer.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

*H.R. Taylor*  
H.R. TAYLOR  
CPT, AGC  
ASST AG

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AVHGC-DST (30 May 1969) 2d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for Period Ending 30 April 1969

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 963752 9 JUL 1969

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GOPP-DT,  
APO 96558

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the quarterly period ending 30 April 1969 from Headquarters, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mech).

2. (C) Comments follow:

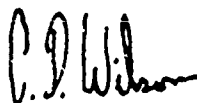
a. (U) Reference item concerning "Tactical Dozers," section II, page 21, paragraph 2b(2); nonconcur. The tank dozer was developed to assist in the reduction of obstacles and to perform rough dozer work to assist in the passage of armor and mechanized traffic. As pointed out in the evaluation portion of the comment, both the CMV and tank dozer are capable of keeping up with the prolonged cross country pace of an armor column. If the blade portion of the CMV and tank dozer have proven unreliable, an EIR should be submitted to improve the equipment. The greater maneuverability and blade control of the military standard bull dozer are not required to permit passage of an armored column.

b. (U) Reference item concerning "Construction of Tactical Fords," section II, page 22, paragraph 2b(5); nonconcur. The construction of a rock ford will dam the flow of water in a stream bed, regardless of the size of rock used. During the rainy season this could cause severe flooding problems, or cause the ford to be washed downstream. If time permits, it is best to use the backfilled culvert type of construction as crossing sites.

c. (C) Reference item concerning "FM retransmission," section II, page 25, paragraph g(1); nonconcur. The occasional requirement for a mount of this type does not justify the development of such an item nor would the development constitute a material improvement over a locally fabricated frame. There is no requirement for the use of such a frame on a vehicle because existing standard installation kits are readily available.

d. (C) Reference item concerning "KAC Codes," section II, page 25, paragraph g(2); concur. The problem has been previously recognized by this headquarters. The 1st Infantry Division is scheduled to test such a code, which has been recently developed by NSA, during August-September 1969.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



C. D. WILSON  
1LT, AGC  
Assistant Adjutant General

Cy furn:  
1st Inf Bde, 5th Inf Div  
XIV Corps

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GPOP-DT (30 May 69) 3d Ind (U)  
SUBJECT: Operational Report of HQ, 1st Infantry Brigade,  
5th Infantry Division for Period Ending 30 April  
1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558 22 AUG 69

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development,  
Department of the Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters has evaluated subject report and forward-  
ing indorsements and concurs in the report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

  
C. E. SHORTT  
CPT, AGC  
ASST AG

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Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D		
(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)		
1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author)		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
HQ, OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310		CONFIDENTIAL
		2b. GROUP
		4
3. REPORT TITLE		
Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Hq, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division		
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)		
Experiences of unit engaged in counterinsurgency operations, 1 Feb 69 - 30 Apr 69.		
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name)		
CO, 1st Infantry Brigade, 5th Infantry Division		
6. REPORT DATE	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	7b. NO. OF REFS
30 May 1969	33	
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.	9a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
b. PROJECT NO.	692327	
c. N/A	9b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
d.		
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY	
N/A	OACSFOR, DA, Washington, D.C. 20310	
13. ABSTRACT		

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DD FORM 1473

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Security Classification